

Remarks


Favorable consideration of the present application, as amended, is respectfully requested. Prior to the entry of this Preliminary Amendment, claims 1-17 were pending in this application. Upon entry of this Preliminary Amendment, claims 18-23 will be pending.

The present application is a divisional of co-pending U.S. patent application Serial No. 10/269,717 filed on October 11, 2002 ("the parent application"), which was a divisional of U.S. patent application Serial No. 10/106,407 filed on March 26, 2002 ("the grandparent application"), which was a continuation of U.S. patent application Serial No. 09/481,901 filed on January 12, 2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,409,450 ("the great-grandparent application"). Claims 1-17 of the present application are the same claims 1-17 as originally filed in the parent, grandparent, and great-grandparent application. The present application has been filed to prosecute claims directed to the species not elected in the earlier applications in response to various restriction requirements.

The Applicants believe that claims 18-23 meet both the formal and substantive requirements for patentability, and are in proper condition for allowance. Accordingly, such action by the Examiner is respectfully requested. If a telephone conference would expedite allowance or answer any further questions, such a call is invited at the Examiner's convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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